



U.S. Department of Justice

United States Attorney

Eastern District of Pennsylvania

615 Chestnut Street

Suite 1250

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19106-4476

(215) 861-8200

For Immediate Release

August 26, 2008

ONE MEMBER OF ASYLUM FRAUD CONSPIRACY PLEADS GUILTY

PHILADELPHIA - Ilya Zherelyev, 46, of Philadelphia, admitted his role in an asylum fraud scheme, announced Acting United States Attorney Laurie Magid. Zherelyev pleaded guilty today to conspiracy, visa/asylum fraud, money laundering, conspiracy to commit money laundering, and failure to appear for a court hearing. He was charged with five other defendants, including alleged scheme leader David Lynn, in July. The business that Lynn ran is alleged to have filed at least 380 bogus asylum applications for clients, between January 2003 and March 2007, charging an average of \$8,000 for an application.

Zherelyev faces a sentence of up to 52 months in prison under advisory sentencing guidelines, and a \$1.75 million fine. Sentencing is scheduled for December 2, 2008.

The case was investigated by the Department of Homeland Security Immigration and Customs Enforcement, the United States Department of Labor Office of Inspector General's Office of Labor Racketeering and Fraud, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Office of Inspector General for Housing and Urban Development; with support from the Citizenship and Immigration Services Office of Fraud Detection and National Security, Department of State Diplomatic Security Services, the Northampton Township Police Department, and the Upper Southampton Township police.

It is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Terri A. Marinari.

**UNITED STATES ATTORNEY'S OFFICE
EASTERN DISTRICT, PENNSYLVANIA
Suite 1250, 615 Chestnut Street
Philadelphia, PA 19106**

**Contact: PATTY HARTMAN
Media Contact
215-861-8525**

COPIES OF NEWS MEMOS AND RELATED DOCUMENTS CAN ALSO BE FOUND AT

<http://www.usdoj.gov/usao/pae>